

Set on the Great P.O.T.

A
SERMON
UPON
Hospitality,

1608

2371

Preach'd at a late

VISITATION

AT

Tunbridge, in KENT.

2 KINGS IV. 38.

*— And he said unto his Servant, set on the Great
P.O.T., and seeke Pottage for the Sons of the
Prophets.*

By H. CORNWALLIS.

The Third Edition.

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Water-side. For the Benefit of the Poor. 1708.*

1608/2371

TO

Alderman Vin,

IN

NORWICH

SIR,

IN N-keepers give these Words of our Saviour for their Motto, *You were an Hungry, and I gave you Meat; you were Thirsty and I gave you Drink*: but seeing our Saviour meaneth not of those that Sell, but give away their *Viaticum*, it more properly belongs to you, whose House is a general Inn for all Persons both Poor and Rich; the first you Treat out of Charity, the last out of Courtesy. Now that God may reward your Hospitality, both in this World, and that which is to come, is the Prayer of your

Most Humble Servant,

H. Cornwallis.





2 KINGS IV. 38.

— And he said to his Servants, Set on the great Pot, and seeke Pottage for the Sons of the Prophets.

I Am now to Preach to a mix'd Congregation, made up of Clergy-men and Lay-men; my Text, *James* like, hath two Faces; the first respects you my Brethren of the Clergy, the other of the Laity.

To you my Brethren of the Clergy that are this day come to honour me with your Company, I preach up Hospitality, not only from the Example of *Elisha*, but from the Holy Word of God, which both commands and commends it to us.

To you of the Laity that are come with good and honest Hearts to hear my Doctrine, I preach up Justice, that you should be so just in paying your Tythes, that you may be hospitably and Charitably received at your Ministers Houses? for if you withdraw their dues, how can they perform their Duty? if you shut your Hands, how can they enlarge their Tables, and be given to Hospitality?

Now that Hospitality is a Duty enjoyned on all Christians, and consequently on all the Preachers of that Doctrine, I will prove by these three Arguments:

1. From the Law of Nature.
2. From the Scripture.
3. From the Examples of good Men that encourage us to perform it.

1. Then from the Law of Nature, they are not merely positive but natural Laws that require us to be

hospitable; these are Laws written in our Hearts and our Minds, which will direct us to them; they are the easy and unforc'd Suggestions of our Souls; and whoever he be that hath been but a little conversant with the Writings of the Heathens, will find that they practised this Duty, and that nothing was so detestable among them, as not to be civil to Strangers: *Inhospita littora populus barbarus*, were appellations of the worst Sound in their Ears; and every little School-boy that had been but some time conversant with the classical Authors, will tell you how *Homer* brings in *Nestor*, importuning *Minerva* and *Telemachus* to stay with him: he tells them they leave him as if they had no Entertainment for them, or that he could not lodge them; but this he would never suffer so long as he kept a Servant.

The *Grecians* are observed by Historians to have two Tables for Strangers; and the *ius Hospitalii* was look'd upon as a most Sacred thing. This shews what Hospitality they used, and what the Heathens themselves thought of it in those old times in which they lived. So that indeed could we not find a Bible in our Closets, neither had we the Will of God from Heaven revealed to us, yet the Light of Nature will dictate to us this Truth.

And indeed 'tis a piece of good Nature, which so well becomes a Man, that it is called Humanity; and therefore the Ancients called our Kindness to Strangers by this Name, Humanity; as if they shew themselves to have more of a Man in them than others, when they were kind to Strangers: And those People that wanted this Generosity, were ever censured by them with this Expression, to be barbarous and inhuman. They banished inhospitable Men from the Society of Mankind, and ranked them among the Wolves and Tygers: They were not fit for the Company of Men, and therefore they ranked them among the worst sort of Beasts.



2. The Scripture. But besides the Law written in our Hearts, the Laws that we have revealed to us from the God of Heaven, and written as I may say, with the Finger of the Almighty, I mean the Holy Scriptures, give us full Proof of it.

How often in that Holy Book is Hospitality enjoyned? how often inculcated? how much commended? and how severely is the neglect of it censured and punished? as may be proved both out of the Old and New Testament.

If at leisure you turn over those sacred Leaves, you will find that the Ancient People of God, the Jews, are in most plain Words commanded to use Strangers well, not to oppress them, no not to vex them, but to love them as themselves, *Exod. 22. 21.* Thou shalt do no Injury to Strangers. And also the same Duty is in the 9th Verse of the following Chapter pressed again, and the Command is back'd with a forcible moving Reason, *viz.* why we should be kind to them: And this was the Reason, because they were Strangers in the Land of Egypt, and knew the hearts of Strangers; they were put in mind of the Condition they were once in, and of the usage they wished from the Egyptians: And this Reasoning supposes they would now deal with others as they once wished they might be dealt withal themselves. And the same Duty is again enjoyned them, *Lev. 19. 34.* *And if the Stranger sojourn with you, &c.*

Why now I pray is this Duty so often inculcated? why are we so often reminded of it, but because 'tis a Duty very necessary for all Men to put in practice? But from the Jews let us now go the Christians, and see how well they practised this Duty. And that you may not think this a legal Precept, and abolished in the time of the Gospel, let us see what Proofs are to be met with in the New Testament, and in *Rom. 13. 12.* you will find it enjoyned the Christians, and they are commanded to use Hospitality: And in *Heb. 13.* they are cautioned

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oned not to forget it; which supposes that Christians are otherwise, both by Nature, and former Revelations, taught to do thus: And in *Mat. 25*, you will find the practice of it is not only good and fit, but necessary and indispensable; which may appear from the sad Doom Christ pass'd on them that neglected it, *I was a Stranger and ye took me not in.* He does not lay this to their Charge, that they were Whoremongers, Adulterers, Murderers, guilty of those open Crimes, which not only the Laws of God do threaten, but the Laws of Men punish with Death; but this was the chief Sin that was laid to their Charge, *I was a Stranger and ye took me not in*, that is, you were inhospitable.

3. And as it is commanded us in the Scripture, so also it is recommended to our practice from the Example of several eminent Persons that have perform'd it: So that we have both Precepts and Precedents to oblige us to it. Rules now are best learned when illustrated with Examples: The Rich Store-house of the Scripture affords us Variety of Instances both in the Old and New Testament; some few I will instance in.

In the Old Law we find it to be the practice of *Abraham* and *Lot*, Men beloved of God, and famous with us; for they were not only honoured while they lived, but are renowned among us to all Posterity: And in *Gen. 18. 1, 2, 3, 4.* we may find *Abraham's* Hospitality recorded, what he did, and with what Heartiness, Alacrity and Diligence he entertain'd them, how free he was in it; they asked not him, but he them: this was a Carriage that became the hearty Goodness of those old times; and it was a Work worthy of, and suitable to the great Faith of that excellent Man: And also in the beginning of *Chap. 19.* we have *Lot's* Hospitality recorded; he saw two Strangers, he went to meet them, bowed himself with his Face to the ground, address'd himself to them, with all the most obliging Civility; he would not be denied; but when they said they would tarry in the Street all Night, he forced them
into

into his House, entertained them bountifully and made a Feast for them. But was this his Kindness unrewarded? how did they gratify their Host: why, the same Chapter tells you how they saved his Life, and rescued him and his Family from those fiery Showers, fatal to the rest of the Inhabitants. And as for his Brother *Abraham*, they so greatly requited his Hospitality, that they gave him the News of a Son in his old Age, and also such a Son in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed.

We also find it upon Record in the New Testament, *Acts 28.* that *Publius* entertained *Paul* three days courteously; and in requital he healed his Father in Law of a Fever: And *Onesiphorus* having once or twice refreshed *Paul* at his Table, he remembered him in his Prayers, and publicly acknowledged his Hospitality in his Epistles.

But now to instance in an Example above all Examples, whose Example if we follow not, we can never go to Heaven, you read *Deut. 10. 18.* God himself is said to love the Stranger, and to give him Food and Raiment: but we have a far greater proof of God's Love to Strangers than these; for us *Gentiles* that were Foreigners hath he visited with his Salvation: To us that had a long time sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, hath he given a Light; he hath given to us with all the Expressions of Kindness imaginable.

Now if this Duty be enjoined us in the Scripture, if it hath been the Practice of God himself, let us then be hospitable, that we may be like unto God.

And indeed as you ought to be hospitable to Strangers, so you ought to be charitable to Poor: we have an Express Mandate for it, *Luke 14. 13, 14.* When thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the Maimed and the Lame, and thou shalt be blessed, &c.

And it may well deserve our Observation, to consider the great Care God took of the Poor in the Mosaic

Law; for besides what was given privately, God made several Laws for the publick and visible Relief of them.

When God Almighty had blessed them with increase, and they came to reap their Harvest, they were commanded to leave some uncut for the benefit of the Poor; *Lev. 19. 9.* And besides every year's Tything, they had the third year's Tythe, which by God's Law was their due; and not only the third year, but the seventh year the Land was to lie still, and they were to share in common the Fruits of it.

Neither did the primitive Christians fall short of the Jews in their Charity, witness that ancient and primitive Institution of the Offertory in the Sacrament, which was so considerable a part of it, that it gave denomination to the whole; and this I have read to be one reason why it is called the Communion-Service, because every Sunday the primitive Christians did Communicate to the Necessities of others.

Nay, we may learn this Duty from the very Heathens themselves; for they had a Temple in *Athens*, and it was dedicated to charitable Uses; and it was the greatest Reproach among them to upbraid one with this, that they had never been at the Temple of Mercy.

And what greater Reproach can it be to a Christian, than to be churlish and unmerciful. We read in the Mosaic Law, that the Shell-fish was accounted unclean, this I take to be one Reason, because the Meat was enclosed in the Shell, and it was hard to come by. They indeed are to be reckoned among the Unclean, viz. among the Wicked and Ungodly, that inclose their Estate within the shell of their Caverns, denying others the Benefit of it; that *Hedge-hog* like, wraps up himself in a Bed of Down, and throws out his Prickles to all the World besides. But besides the command of God, and the Example of good Men, common Gratitude may oblige us to this Duty; we are all born Beg-

gars,

gars, and live upon Alms, and all the Creatures do liberally contribute to our Necessities; the Sun hath not his Light for himself; but enriches the Earth with his golden Beams: The Earth brings forth a fruitful Crop; one Creature gives us Wool, another Silk; nay, all the Creatures, in some sort, administer to Man's Necessities; and now shall every Creature be good to Man, and shall Man himself be inhuman to his Neighbour.

But beside common Gratitude, our own Interest may oblige us to this Duty; 'tis the best Money we can lay out, and brings to the Donor the greatest Advantage; *He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord*, who gives double Interest for the Money, and Rewards us with Temporal and Eternal Blessings.

It was the Counsel of him that was the wisest Man that ever the Universe yet bore (our Saviour Christ excepted, who was both God and Man) *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters, and thou shalt find it after many Days*. The Word is not *do*, give, but *mitte*, send; like a person that sends an Adventure to Sea, 'tis lost for the present, but he hopes it will one day turn to great Advantage.

Give me leave to super-add one Motive more: As Charity procures Blessings, so also doth it divert those Judgments that hang over our Heads. When *Nebuchadnezzar* for his Pride had a Vision that God would take away his Kingdom, he consulted with *Daniel* what to do; and his Counsel to him was this, *Break off your Sins by Righteousness, and your Iniquities by doing good to the Poor*: As if his Alms could divert those Judgments that hanged over his Head, and the practice of these could wash away his Offences; and like Celestial Fullers-Earth, take the Spots of the Flesh from the Soul. We find it therefore ranked with Righteousness in the Scripture, and they are promiscuously used one for the other. And this put *Job* into such an Amazement, that his Afflictions should befall him when he had been so merciful

merciful to the Poor. And indeed though the Poor be counted a Burden to many of us, yet among the Jews they were reckoned among their greatest Blessings. And this we find to be one of God's Promises to them, that the Poor shall be always among them, that so they might know what to do with their Wealth. Now that you may dispose of your Alms to the best Advantage, take along with you these following Rules.

1. *De nostris dandum.* When *Selimas* the great *Turk* lay on his Death-bed, being moved by *Pimbis* to bestow that Wealth that he had wronged the *Persian* Merchants of, upon charitable Uses, he made this honest Reply, Nay, rather, saith he, let it be sent back to the right Owners. And shall not a Christian's Creed be much better than a *Turk's Alcoran*? 'Tis a Will not pleasing to God, nor yet good Men, when a Person on his Death-bed bequeaths his Soul to God, and his ill-gotten Goods to the Poor. Neither can he be thought Charitable that robs perhaps an hundred Families to build an Hospital for seven Drowns.

2. The second Rule is this; what you give must be done with a good Intention. I have read of a Traitor, who being hired to imbrue his Hands in Royal Blood, made his Attempt on the Royal Person, but by Accident only cut off a Wen, which the Skill of the ablest Chirurgeon durst not venture; so that instead of killing he cureth his Enemy. Now whether the accidental Good he did could compound for the Wickedness of his intended Treason, I leave to any sober Person to Judge.

3. The third Rule is this; Give as you are able: 'Tis not always necessary that Alms should come out of a Sack; a Man may be charitable though he hath not an expanding Plenty. A little Purse contained that mite which was the greatest gift in the Treasury, I mean the poor Widow's Gift, which was acceptable to God, because coming from her who wanted it her self. But should the Rich man take his measures from hence, and

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and give no more than she did, he would come as far
short of her Charity, as she did of his Wealth.

I am now come to address my self to the Laitie; and
to you I recommend a just and great care of paying
whatsoever the Laws of the Land have made the dues
of your *Minister*, and by no means to look with an
evil Eye upon what is allotted them as an Encourage-
ment to discharge their Office. When *St Paul* makes
it the Qualification of a Bishop, that he should be gi-
ven to Hospitality, (1 Tim. 3. 2.) you may be sure
that he did not, like the *Egyptian Tyrant*, enjoy them
to make Breck without Straw. He did not design they
should build Castles in the Air, and feed their Guests
with thin Notions and Speculations only. And with-
out a supply of these earthly things, it was not possi-
ble that they should set more than a Chymical Ta-
ble before them, as the Enchanter did before his Roy-
al Guests: No, he tells you, that no Man goeth to
Warfare at his own Cost, and he that plants a Vine-
yard, eats of the Fruit of it; and he that keeps a Flock,
is maintained with the Profit of it. From whence he
argues the Equity of Ministers being liberally supplied
by them in Temporals, whose Spiritual Good they
have devoted themselves and their Labours to; and
therefore in pursuance of the same thing as a Man, as
one that had reason, and might argue from thence
for it, but he had the Institution and Command of
God to back him herein; *Say I these things as a Man? or
saith not the Law the same also?* 1 Cor. 9. 8. For it is
written in the Law of Moses, *Thou shalt not muzzle the
Ox that treadeth out the Corn.* Doth God take care for
Oxen, or saith it altogether for our sakes? Was the
Precept given in regard to the Beasts alone, or rather
had it no further Reference to his Servants, the Priests
and Levites, who prepared spiritual Food for the Peo-
ple? For our sakes no doubt he spake it, and he that
refresheth in hope, should be Partaker of the same Hope.

Nay,

Nay, he proceeds further, and shews how mean a Recompence this is for the mighty Advantages we bring to the World, the immortal Glories and Happineſs, that we, as Heralds proclaim, purchaſed by our great Maſter the bleſſed Jeſus for you: If we have ſown unto you Spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things? If we teach how to live and be happy for ever, is it ſuch a wonderful thing that you contribute towards our Living, and being eaſy for a time here? Do you not know that they which Miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the Temple, are maintained by the Offerings and Oblations that are made there?

You know little of the Conſtitution among the Jews, if you think any opened or ſhut a Door in the Temple for nought, *Mal. 1. 10.* and if all the Inferior Officers had fair Allotments in proportion, much more they who attend at the Altar, were partakers with the Altar, ſhared in all the Gifts and Offerings which were brought thither. But why do I go about to light the Sun with a Taper, and prove that to you by Reason, which is ſo manifeſt by the Word of God? Perhaps my Sermon may make no Impreſſion on your Hearts, becauſe they are the Words of a Mortal Man; behold, I will turn you to the words of the ever-living God: I am a frail Man and may err, but God is a God of Truth that cannot lie, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips; hear then what he ſays by his Prophet *Mala-*
chy, ch. 3. 8, 9, 10. Will a Man rob God? yet ye have robbed me: But ye ſay, Wherein have we robbed thee? In Tythes and Offerings. Ye are curſed with a Curſe: for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nati-

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on. *Bring ye my Tythes into my House, and prove me, whether I will not open the Windows of Heaven, and put out a Blessing, &c.* In which Words we may observe, 1st. Their Sin, they robbed God. 2^{dly}, Their Punishment, they are Cursed. 3^{dly}, The means to divert this Judgment, *via*, To bring the full Tythes.

Will a Man Rob God? 'Tis an horrible Wickedness to rob and dispoil our Parents or Masters, to ravish their Goods and Maintenance from them; but to rob our God is a Wickedness much more flagitious, a Sin so monstrous, that the Jews tho' then very much degenerated and corrupted, startled at the mention of, *Ye have robbed me: But they say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In Tythes and Offerings.* For God, the great Donor of all, had reserved these to himself, which he gave to his Priests for their Service in his Worship; and with holding these, they Robbed him. Hear then the Judgment that he denounced against them, *Ye are cursed with a Curse.* 'Tis bad to be Cursed by Man: *Elisha's* Curse prov'd fatal to the Children bred up in Idolatry, that call'd him Bald Pate. Now if the Curse of Man prov'd so fatal, what is God's Curse? But now, what was there to redeem them from this Curse? Mark in the following Verse, *Bring all the Tythes into the Store-House, that there may be Meat in my House.* A mighty Encouragement not only for them, but for all succeeding Generations, to have a regard for things Sacred.

But now to draw to a Conclusion, give me leave to make this short Address to my Brethren of the Clergy, not to instruct them in their Duty, but to
speak

Speak their Thoughts in my plain Words. If the Laity be just to us, let not us be unjust to our Master, but let us give according as we are able, to the Necessity of the Poor. Remember the Levites were the least of all the Tribes, yet their Priviledges and Revenues were greater than any other of the Tribes, for they had not only the tenths of all the fruits of the Land, but a share in all the Peace Offerings and Free-will Offerings of the People in their Redemption of several things sacred to God (as the First-Born) besides the many Cities and Lands which were set apart in every Tribe for them, with numberless other things that belonged to them. Nay, as I learned once, by the Conference of an eminent Divine of the Church of *England*, they had near the sixth part of the Revenue of the Nation allotted to them.

But now why, I pray, were their Priviledges and Revenues greater than any of the other Tribes? Why, this I take to be the Reason, because they were not only Priests, but Almoners to the other Tribes; and their Houses were as Hospitals to the Poor:

Let us therefore as the Apostles advise us, be given to Hospitality; and following the Example of this great Prophet in time of Dearth, *set on the great Pot, and seethe the Pottage for our Poor Brethren in Distress.*

I shall now conclude with this earnest Prayer, That you may never want Clergy, Learned Persons, and Orthodox and diligent Workmen, that need not be ashamed, daily dividing the Word of truth; and like good Stewards, breaking the Bread of life,
and

and distributing to each, in their Families, suitable to their Needs and Capacities ; and by an Holy Life, may powerfully lead, as well as by sound Doctrine safely guide them into Heaven.

And I do further pray, that these may never want a People teachable and obedient, who may receive them as the Angels of God, the Ambassadors of Christ, and the Glory of the Churches ; and then there is no doubt but they will meet with not only their legal dues, but many grateful returns for their abundant Labours, reverencing their Persons, consulting their reputations, contriving for their decent and becoming Support and Maintenance. In a Word, esteeming them and theirs, highly for their Works sake.

This would make our Country a Land of delight indeed, the Glory of all Places, a little Resemblance and Figure of Heaven, where Knowledge, Righteousness, Love and Unity, with all other Graces and Virtues, would flourish and abound, to the Praise of him who has called us out of Darkness to his infinite Light ; which God of his infinite Goodness grant, for the sake of his dear Son, and our Saviour Christ Jesus the Righteous, to whom with the Father and Eternal Spirit be ascribed all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion:

F I N I S.

*A Catalogue of Sermons Printed and Sold by H. Hills, in
Black-friars, near the Water-side.*

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